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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

STATEMENT BY MR. MARTIN SHEARMAN
AMBASSADOR FOR DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACEBUILDING
UNITED KINGDOM MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

IN RESPONSE TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN WOMEN,
PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NCGUKA

15 September 2014

(Check against delivery)
Mr President, I would like to thank you, and the Executive Director, for your opening statements.

Mr President,

Women and girls around the world continue to face inequality, discrimination and threats to their safety and security. Many women continue to lack economic autonomy and empowerment as well as sufficient voice and representation at all levels of decision-making. And twenty years after the landmark Beijing and Cairo conferences, many still face denial of their sexual and reproductive rights.

We need your continued leadership Madam Executive Director, as well as the support of your organisation, to help Member States rise to the challenge of crafting a new development agenda: a new set of development goals that tackles these long-standing inequalities and catalyses real progress for women and girls worldwide. The twenty year review of the Beijing Platform for Action this year is a timely opportunity to deepen our understanding of the remaining challenges and help us address them.

We must also make progress on the crucial Women, Peace & Security Agenda. UN Women is about to undertake a review of the last 15 years of implementing Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. We hope that the review will pull together meaningful evidence for what works, make concrete and actionable
recommendations, and be accessible to a wide range of audiences including the military. We hope that Member States will support UN Women in carrying out this important work.

Madam Executive Director, as you know, this year has already seen a record number of political and humanitarian crises. As often when emergencies strike, women, who bear the burden of care, have been the hardest hit by the Ebola outbreak. More than ever the response needs to be well-coordinated and to take into account the particular needs and vulnerabilities of women. We look forward to the discussion on UN Women humanitarian work later today. We believe UN Women can add value to humanitarian action. But it also needs to play to its comparative advantage and find its niche in a crowded space. In our view it can do so by fostering a more gender-sensitive response, working with others on preparedness, disaster risk reduction as well as post-disaster needs assessment and early recovery work.

Madam Executive Director, in order to meet all these challenges, UN Women must be able to demonstrate the progress it makes on the ground. The meta-analysis of evaluations provides important recommendations for UN Women. We know that a lot of them have been acted upon already, and look forward to seeing evidence of progress against these recommendations in the next meta-analysis. UN Women must also be able to access flexible and predictable resources that are aligned to its mandate. We therefore reiterate the importance we attach to a constructive discussion with Member States about a critical mass of resources to finance the Strategic Plan. We hope this
ongoing structured dialogue will help identify innovative ways to broaden the donor base and increase core contributions.

In closing Mr President, I would like to thank UN Women and you Madam Executive Director, for your contribution in the success of the “Girl Summit” that Prime Minister Cameron convened in London in July. The aim of the Girl Summit was to help rally a global movement to end female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. The Girl Summit Charter, which outlines an agenda for change, was agreed by more than 450 signatories, including 36 governments. Over 130 governments, organisations and individuals made commitments to action to end FGM and/or CEFM. And the Girl Summit social media campaign generated more than 11,000 online pledges to end the practices and more than 130,000 social media posts – creating close to one billion chances to see Girl Summit messages.

Mr President, Madam Executive Director,

We place huge value in our partnership with UN Women, and look forward to our continued collaboration.

I thank you.